

# LIFE IN BELEAGUERED MAFEKING

## Scenes and Incidents In the Heroic Siege Endured by Colonel Baden-Powell and His Garrison.

[From Our Special Correspondent in Mafeking.]

THE merry siege of Mafeking! That is what the outside world is calling the struggle of this little frontier town against 5,000 Boers. I wonder if any one outside of Mafeking today realizes the bitter irony of that little phrase!

At the time of writing this, indeed, Mafeking has every reason to be far from merry. Even as I write I can hear the boom of the Boers' Big Ben cough-

Friday afternoon the Boers had torn up the railway to the south, and there we were, isolated on the lonely fringe of the great Kalahari desert, stretching away to the west, and the dull, rolling veldt of Bechuanaland fading into the north. In other words, there we were, stranded in the ground swell of civilization, shut up in the jumping off place of civilized South Africa.

The first episode of our cutting off was a stroke of luck for us. We had, we found, two unused carloads of dynamite here. New, dynamite is not a good

for all that, with a handful of cavalry, had his brush with the Boers on the north of the town. Then came Captain Fitz Clarence's scrap, and an incident which made the garrison very hot. Our ambulance was sent out to recover two bodies left on the field. There was not the slightest suspicion on the part of our men of any intended violation of the usual amenities of warfare, for only that day, curiously enough, a communication had been brought in from General Cronje suggesting that arrangements should be entered into, a la Geneva convention, whereby the usual principles of civilized warfare might be observed by both sides. Our ambulance

had scarcely got out of the town, however, when it was met with the merriest hail of Mauser bullets that ever riddled a Red Cross flag. Whether it was accident or design I am not in a position to say, but one thing I do know, and that is that it aroused a great deal of bitterness at headquarters. The note from Cronje, nevertheless, was answered with all due courtesy by our colonel, who pointed out that the Boers were violating the very principles for which they were clamoring. The next day a member of the Boer general's medical staff arrived on the scene in state, dashing up under a flag of truce in a handsome landau drawn by a team of spirited gray mares. His name, I found, was Dr. Pirow. He brought with him a note from General Cronje asking for particulars regarding the firing on our ambulance, and even stating his will-

ing to Captain Fitz Clarence's midnight sortie on Big Ben just before Christmas, our men, who all wore soft shoes for the occasion, found the burghers quite ready for them, and came back to town and went disconsolately to bed.

All the outworks about the town were then supplied with underground shell-proof accommodations for ammunition and the whole of the garrison of each. In every section of the town big mounds of earth were thrown up, each having good interior apartments. These were made of railway rails, corrugated iron sheets, old timbers—anything and everything that offered. As time has progressed, however, there is a wonderful improvement to be noticed in the interior of these shellproof lodgings. Some of them, in fact, have been very sumptuously and luxuriously furnished and are as comfortable and roomy chambers as one could look for in an American hotel. Perhaps the most attractive of all of our popular heroine, Lady Sarah Wilson. Officers here have denuded their rooms and closets have robbed their homes of little knickknacks and handed them over to Lady Sarah. So, while all England has been bemoaning the fact that a blue blooded young lady should have to endure the hardships of a siege, that same energetic little blue blooded lady has been enjoying life to the full—at least as things go in times of war, famine and sudden death.

Our colonel also converted the cellars

men been pinched for powder and shot. Provisions, too, we had in great quantity, but over 5,000 hungry mouths soon make vast inroads into the largest stock of foodstuffs. In this number I am including, of course, the 3,000 blacks who make up the Kaffir staff just outside our own limits, and who have to be taken care of by us. We get a little work out of these blacks, and a few of them have been useful as runners, but they are not brimming over with energy.

But it was in artillery that we have been woefully weak. The Boers have had their huge Big Ben, which throws a 34 pound shell, while for most of the time our heaviest guns have been 7 pounders. If you can imagine a maddening situation, you have it here. It seems like pepping away at a mountain with pea shooters. We are out-ranged, and the Boers know it. We always have known it. The most we can do is to crawl out to our extremest outpost trenches and there send a few impotent Maxim and rifle bullets in the direction of Big Ben's emplacement, from whence come those terrible screaming, booming 34 pound exploding messengers of death. And I might state in passing that the Boers all along seem to have been most extravagant and reckless with their ammunition. Many of their bombardment movements have lacked both apparent purpose and definite results, for all of which, of course, we are humbly thankful.

Perhaps nothing will show our dearth of artillery better than the fever of excitement which was raised by the finding of an antiquated old naval 16 pounder gun not far from the Kaffir stadt, where it had laid rusting for years. It is a queer old gun, weighing about half a ton and stamped "No. 6, Port." It was probably made about 1770. For some time it was lying on the farm of an Englishman who has interests in the native stadt, and there is a tradition that two Germans brought it up from the coast more than 40 years ago. For some time it was used up country by the Baralongs in their internal wars and later was used against Dutch freebooters. This old relic, when

christened in honor of the colonel, and, though they are made with laughably crude materials, their effects are not altogether unsatisfactory. So Lady Smith is not the only town that can claim a naval gun.

Considering the amount of ammunition with which the Boers have honored us surprisingly little damage has been done to the town. Why the loss of life has been so small is easily explained. The lookout men, as soon as daylight appears, are on the watch for signs of activity on the Big Ben emplacement, for their gunners always seem to go to bed with the sun, and when a shell is seen to be coming our way the alarm is promptly given. The telephone bell down in the little outpost cellar gives its nervous little tinkle, the word goes to headquarters that Big Ben has coughed up, and the next moment a native rings the big alarm bell that has been hung in the center of the town. And what a scampering there is then! Every one rushes for the dugouts and bombproof cellars, and Mafeking looks like a city of the dead. Then the expected shell strikes, explodes, scatters its dust and masonry, and before the cloud of debris has settled down there is a merry scramble for fragments of the explosive intruder, to be treasured as souvenirs or shot back from the mouth of "B. P."

The town has been so honeycombed by these military moles of ours that one may hear on every hand some intending caller or an officer inquiring just what would be the safest trenches and dugouts to take to reach So-and-so, much the same as one might ask what streets to take to reach an afternoon tea. Rie's hotel, where I now am, has been struck several times, and is, in fact, minus one side and rather shaky on its foundations just at present. The convent has also suffered severely, though the brave hearted sisters in that institution have shown the greatest courage in the face of danger, sometimes having to be driven to shelter against their will. A shell also landed in the operating room of the hospital. It was, of course, an accident, just as are the different shells in the women's quarters. These are accidents, though, that have been deplorably frequent. If it had not been for the losses sustained in our different reconnoitering expeditions into the open, it might be said that our loss had been phenomenally small. These reconnoissances were, after all, more or less necessary, and, if not directly successful on every occasion, they at least

cut off our water supply from the Molopo river we have kept the blacks busy making wells. We have plenty of water, pure enough, I suppose, but rather brackish and muddy. At any rate it is wet.

But, as I said before, this merry siege of Mafeking has its bitter little ironies. Every one pretends to be cheerful, but, helighe, 'tis sad work. The men have fretted themselves thin because they can't get at the Boers, and there is considerable sickness in the women's quarters. But we have an occasional hand concert, sometimes a merry enough singing bee and sometimes an amateur performance at one of the Mafeking hotels. On Sundays, during the armistice, we play cricket. At such times of temporary peace it is a strange sight to see our men and the Boers chatting together at the wire fence that separates their territory from ours. One of our jolliest affairs was a baby show, only those babies born since the beginning of the siege being admitted. There were six competitors and two awards, and also, I might add, four very irate mammas. We also had an agricultural and produce show, at which cattle, fruit, vegetables and flowers were shown. Oh, for the chance of one more show like that! Mafeking at the present time! The very memory of it makes my mouth water.

CHARLES EDGAR HOSKINS.  
Mafeking, British Bechuanaland, Africa.

### A STORY OF THE KAISER.

The Christmas fair is an institution in Berlin. A fortnight before the regular time rows of wooden sheds filled with cheap articles of all kinds are opened in some public street or square, and the poorer classes purchase their presents there, while for children of every rank to wander up and down the rows of booths is rapture. The Empress Frederick, when crown princess, used to go with her husband and children to the Weihnachts market, which was then held in the big square near the Schloss, called Lust garden. The children were allowed to save their pocket money and spend it at the fair just as they liked.

A good story is told of the Kaiser and Prince Heinrich when about 12 years old. They had received permission to go to the fair with their tutor on the very day a disaster occurred to them. There was a grand quarrel on with the housemaid who had to clean the princes' rooms. Clara had dared her face was daubed with soot. She was daubed with soot.

At this critical moment the crown princess passed along the passage, and, hearing Clara's loud protests, came to her sons' room. The maid tried with the sleeves of her light gown to wipe her face, and the crown princess at once grasped the situation. "Now," said she, "you have spoiled Clara's dress; you must repair the damage. Such a dress costs 10 marks. How much money have you?"

The boys, with shamefaced expression, counted out their cherished savings. There were only 7 marks and 50 pfennigs between the two. "I will lend you the remaining 3 marks 50 from your next week's pocket money," said their mother, giving the maid the money, "and it will be no good your going to the Christmas fair, as you have no cash, so you will both stay indoors."

The Kaiser and his brother remember their chagrin to this day.

### HIS COUNTRY'S LIBERATOR.

Simon Bolivar is the man to whom, above any other person, South America owes its freedom from Spanish oppression. A native of Venezuela, after visiting England and the United States in 1809, he determined to liberate his own country from foreign domination. After the insurrection at Caracas, April 19, 1810, he was sent to London to interest the British government in behalf of the insurgents or "patriots," but, finding this in vain, he entered the army under General Miranda and fought in many successful engagements.

The Spaniards, however, regained possession of Venezuela, and Bolivar fled to Curacao. Here, with the aid of the government of New Granada, he raised a new army, with which he entered Caracas as a conqueror on Aug. 4, 1813. He was hailed as the liberator of Venezuela and appointed dictator for life. Six years later, at Angostura, he received the title of president and the powers of dictatorship. He next freed New Granada from Spanish rule and attached it to Venezuela as a republic under the name of Colombia, being rewarded with the presidency of the new state.

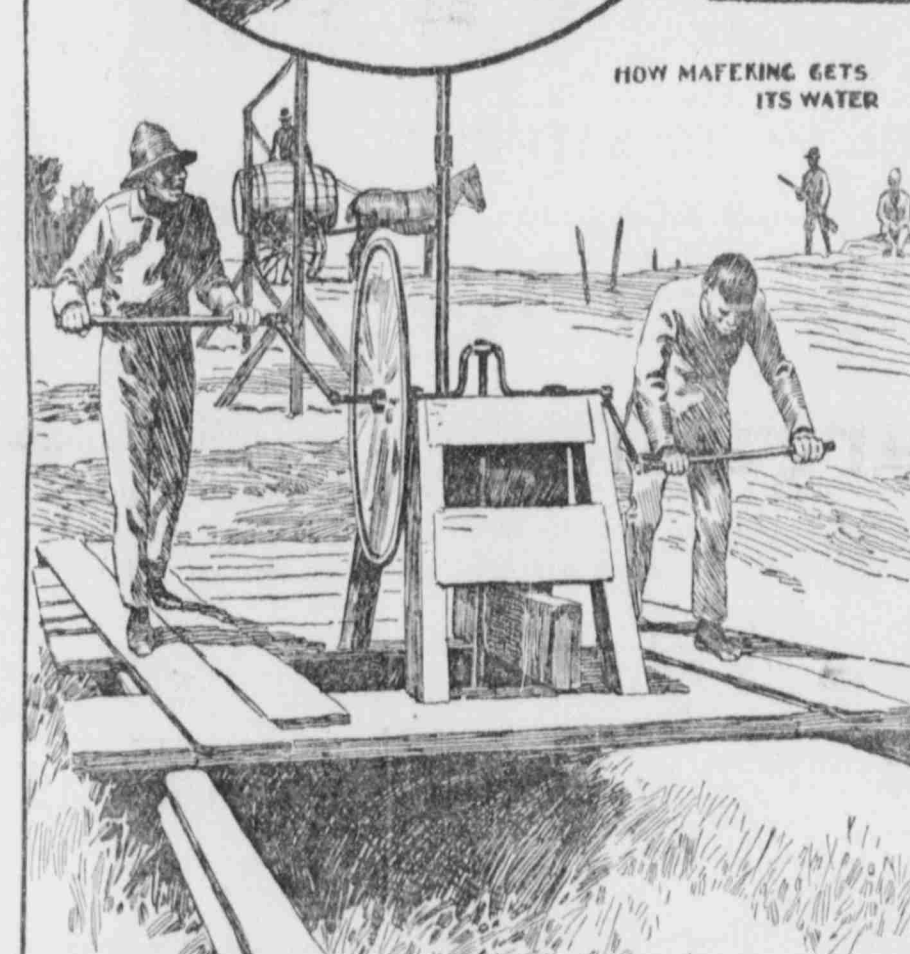
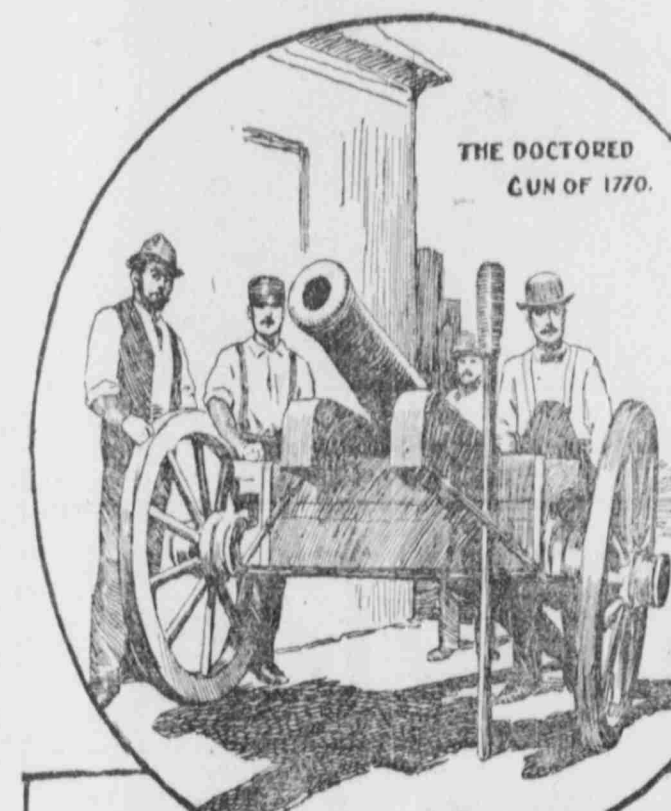
In 1824 the Spanish were finally driven from Peru, and within three years the Bolivian code was adopted by Bolivia and Ecuador. But jealousies and conspiracies arose, and scarcely had the liberator of South America been appointed president for life when he was ejected from the office and bitterly denounced as an ambitious adventurer. Venezuela separated from Colombia immediately. Bolivar retired to Cartagena in 1830, but not until the government of Bogota, repenting of its ingratitude, had voted him a pension of 30,000 planters, with the thanks of the people. He died in the prime of life at the age of 47 years.

### A CROWN WORTH \$2,000,000.

The state crown of Great Britain was made 61 years ago for the queen's coronation and is among the lightest of European crowns. Although it weighs only two pounds seven ounces, its value is \$2,000,000, and it contains 3,600 stones, many of them historical. One enormous sapphire came from the signet ring of Edward the Confessor and from this association it is supposed to have the power of healing disease. One of the rubies, however, has a sadly tragic history. It was at one time in the possession of one of the kings of Granada, whom Pedro the Cruel invited to his palace and basely murdered out of greed for this gem.

writer, "is one of those old fashioned statesmen who believe that a legislator should not be under obligation to a corporation. He says that he never accepted a railroad pass. He pays, too, for his telegrams, never even taking advantage of the government rate."

Ab Ak, a Boothbay (Me.) fisherman, claims to have the shortest name in record. It is not abbreviated, either.

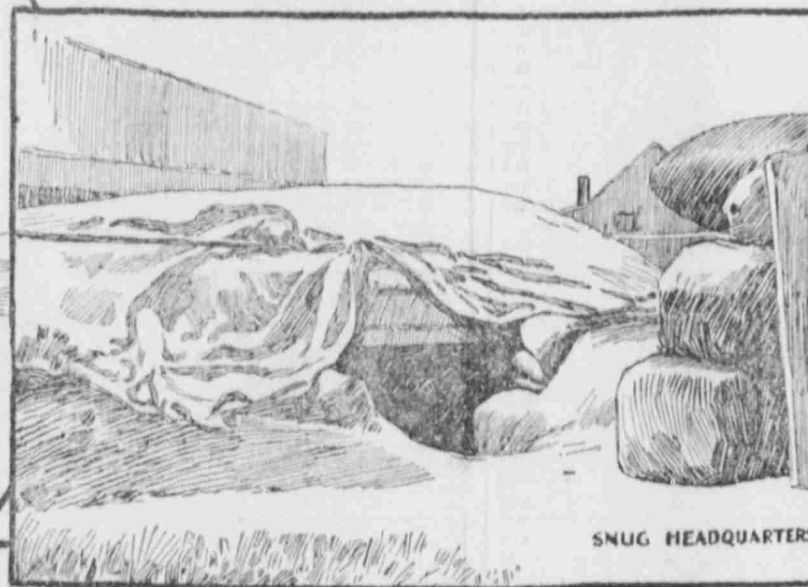


SCENES IN BESIEGED MAFEKING.

ing its big 34 pound shells into the town and the thunder of their 64 pound howitzers mingling with the rattle of their quick firing Krupps. It has got to be an old, old song, this deep, bass roar and whistle and scream of projectiles, with the smoke and smell of bursting shells. Snyman's men, after a short rest, have wakened up today, and from both the north and east they are now raising their lead and steel into our little town. Mafeking is taking it meekly. Shell dodging soon loses its novelty, and there is no excitement. We have all grown used to the danger, and many of the people about here, I notice, are now desperately reckless in exposing themselves. It is the dull, tragic, terrible monotony of it all that is unendurable. When will Pinner come? That is the question on every lip. It can only be answered by a despondent shake of the head and a melancholy and half hopeless glance out over the long, wide, gray veldt, where we can see the dull white blur of the Boer wagons drawn up in laager. At the outpost forts and redoubts men stand all day long with binoculars up to their eyes looking into the horizon for some glimpse of the flying column that was to reach us so soon, and as yet has not arrived.

It is all very weary work. In Rie's hotel, where I am writing this, I can hear the click of billiard balls from the next room and occasional bursts of loud laughter, but it is the sort of laughter one does not like. It has a strained and forced and nervous ring to it. It is not drunken laughter, mark you, for when even beer is 3 shillings a glass—well, blue ribbon societies are rather unnecessary.

But, as I said before, it is growing weary work. It was on Wednesday, the 11th of October, you will remember, that Cronje and his men came over the border. The next day he cut our communications with the south, and, although the different correspondents here kept the wires hot, not one-quarter of what we had to say ever reached Cape Town. By



HOW MAFEKING GETS ITS WATER.



of many of the houses in the town into bombproof places of retirement, and in the meantime called for a volunteer home guard. There already was Colonel Hore, with his 400 regulars of the Protectorate Regiment, and a few score Bechuanaland Rifles—smart looking fellows in khaki uniforms and brown leather slouch hats with white pug-garries, a handful of Cape Police and a squad of British South Africa Police.

But these regulars could have done nothing against our 5,000 Boers without the home guard. Indeed, it has been the irregulars, it seems to me, who have always been most itching for fight, most daring in the different reconnoissances and most bitter in the stands against Snyman and his men. When the siege began, we had, thanks to the fact that Mafeking has long been a sort of frontier storehouse for the northern wilderness stretching up to Bulawayo, plenty of supplies on hand. Just what ammunition we had I have never been able to learn, but not once have our

### ALL THE WORLD OVER.

In the famous Wiertz museum at Brussels, where the works of the eccentric painter Wiertz are preserved, is a painting representing Napoleon in his internal regions. A Dutch artist has reproduced the picture, but has placed Mr. Chamberlain's head on Napoleon's shoulders. The painting has been exhibited in Holland for the benefit of the Boer fund.

The British Ironclad Warrior, which is the oldest warship of its kind in her majesty's navy, has just been stricken from the roll of vessels in active service. The Warrior was launched in 1860 and completed the next year. She has

a displacement of 9,210 tons, and her iron armor is four and one-half inches thick.

An example of patient industry is the sorting of boys' bristles as it is carried on at Tien-tsin, China. Each bristle of the 600,000 kilograms exported from that place in 1895 had to be picked out, measured and placed in the bundle of hairs of corresponding length, and the different lengths by which the hairs are sorted are numerous.

War correspondents in South Africa say that the land in the vicinity of Kimberley is so sublimely that even ants cannot exist upon it.

The president of Harvard college who served longest was Edward Holyoke, whose term extended from 1737 to 1763, in all 26½ years. President Eliot's term

begin May 19, 1869. If he lives and serves until the end of November next, he will surpass the years of service of President Holyoke.

John F. Wilson, delegate to congress from Arizona, is credited with being the most languid member of the house. Most of the time during the daily sessions he is stretched at full length on one of the many couches in the cham-

ber. Mr. Wilson hopes for promotion to "the millionaires' club" when Arizona is admitted to statehood.

Postoffice servants in London are required to report to their superior officers any case of scarlet fever, smallpox, typhus fever, cholera, diphtheria, measles or typhoid fever occurring in their homes.

"Senator Bate of Tennessee," says a